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PRESS RELEASE –
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**CITY OF WILMINGTON
WEED AND SEED SITE
RECEIVES OFFICIAL RECOGNITION**

United States Attorney Colm F. Connolly announced today that the City of Wilmington Weed and Seed site received a Certificate of Official Recognition (OR) from the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) in Washington, DC and, as a result the site is eligible to apply for future CCDO funding and use the Weed and Seed logo. OR is valid for five (5) calendar years starting June 1, 2005 and the first-year funding is limited to \$175,000.

The OR application process is highly rigorous and is the mechanism by which CCDO determines Weed and Seed site designation and the opportunity to compete for federal funding. This year CCDO approved 22 out of 110 applications. Due to the high demand for OR, limited available funding, and to afford as many communities facing severe crime problems with the opportunity to benefit from the Weed and Seed strategy, CCDO accepted OR applications for new site designation only. Consequently, it was necessary for the site to relocate from the West Center City area to the Prices Run vicinity of the city. The boundaries for the new site will be Census Tract 6.02. Further, given both the limited funding available and the increased number of OR applications received annually, sustain ability of effort, including leveraging of other resources, is a critical component in successful implementation of the Weed and Seed strategy.

U.S. Attorney Connolly stated, “the approval of the OR application is a reflection of the exemplary efforts of partners from all levels, including grass root community organizations, and is a prime example of what can be achieved when we all work together. This is a remarkable opportunity and we look forward to partnering with the agencies who

have continually sought a better quality of life for the Prices Run community.” U.S. Attorney Connolly also praised the efforts of the team who worked tirelessly throughout the OR application process.

Weed and Seed Coordinator Adrienne Bey added, “the Ministry of Caring (MOC) is very excited about the new possibilities that lie ahead for us in the new target area. We have had some successes in West Center City and we are hopeful to continue that legacy in the new area. MOC plans to collaborate with existing agencies, programs, neighborhood groups, and faith-based organizations who have a vested interest in seeing positive change in the area. We also believe that our partnership with the Wilmington Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies is critical for our success.”

Mayor Baker stated, “the Weed and Seed program has been invaluable to the City of Wilmington in terms of our overall law enforcement efforts. Simply having the resources that enable us to target higher crime areas fits nicely into our overall law enforcement strategy.”

Wilmington Police Chief Szczerba said, “I look forward to our continued involvement with the Weed and Seed program which will strengthen the relationship between the community and the police department in facing the many public safety challenges in Northeast Wilmington.”

Councilwoman Stephanie T. Bolden stated, “I look forward to Weed and Seed coming to the Northeast area. I am sure it will be very successful because of the dedication and commitment from the community, the council person and the state representative. The Weed and Seed strategy will assist in restoring our neighborhoods back to what they use to be -- safe for our seniors, young people and new home owners.”

Operation Weed and Seed is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in targeted high-crime neighborhoods across the country. The Weed and Seed strategy involves a two-pronged approach: law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in “weeding out” criminals who participate in violent crime and drug abuse, attempting to prevent their return to the targeted area; and “seeding” brings human services to the area, encompassing prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood revitalization.

U.S. Attorney Connolly also expressed his appreciation to Delaware's Congressional Delegation, Senators Biden and Carper and Congressman Castle for their continued support of Weed and Seed.

For more information, contact Kimberlynn Reeves at (302)573-6277, ext. 146.

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